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June 13, 2018

Man Sentenced to 10 Years for Role in Insurance Fraud Ring

An insurance adjuster has been sentenced to 10 years in state prison for his part in a staged auto collision ring in which 26 other defendants are charged, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced today.

Erwin Raul Mejia (dob 8/11/75) was given the combined sentence on June 8 after he pleaded guilty to six felony counts of insurance fraud in case LAo86888 and four felony counts of insurance fraud in case BA465917.

Mejia, who was convicted of insurance fraud in 2005 as well, was ordered to pay almost \$700,000 in restitution to six insurance companies, including three where he had been employed, as part of the June 6 negotiated plea agreement.

According to prosecutors, Mejia played an integral role in a staged auto collision ring that obtained insurance policies with the intent to submit fraudulent bodily injury, vandalism and property damage claims. The fraud dated from 2012 to 2016, according to the criminal complaint for case LA086888.

Mejia also was involved in other auto insurance fraud from 2011 through 2017, according to the complaint for case BA465917. The total damages to the victims in the two cases totaled almost \$1.7 million.

Among the 18 other defendants in case LAo86888 is Mervin Galang Dungca (dob 11/27/70), who is charged with 82 felony counts of insurance fraud. Prosecutors said Dungca was the "capper" who recruited businesses and individuals to take part in the insurance fraud ring. Dungca faces up to 91 years in state prison if convicted as charged.

Edgar Omar Estrada Romero (dob 7/18/78), who owns an auto body shop, is charged with 35 felony counts of insurance fraud and faces up to 44 years in state prison if convicted as charged.

Also facing charges in the case are Benjamin Gabayan (dob 2/21/63), who is charged with 27 felony counts of insurance fraud and faces up to 36 years in state prison if convicted, and Peiman Shayan (dob 3/21/64), aka Ron Shayan, who is charged with 18 felony counts of insurance fraud and faces up to 27 years in state prison.

Nine other defendants have already pleaded guilty to insurance fraud and received sentences of up to two years in county jail, as well as being ordered to pay a total restitution of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The remaining defendants' next court date is a preliminary hearing setting Aug. 10 in Department 103 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center.

In case BA465917, Mejia's eight co-defendants face a total of 15 felony counts of insurance fraud. The next court dates for those defendants is a preliminary hearing setting June 22 in Department 30 and July 17 in Department 50 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center.

Deputy District Attorney Guy Shirley of the Automobile Insurance Fraud Division is prosecuting both cases, and Deputy District Attorney Michael Fern of the Cyber Crime Division is also prosecuting case LAo86888.

The cases remain under investigation by the California Department of Insurance.

About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.